

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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PURPOSE, INTENT, AND APPLICABILITY

Rancho Cordova Design Guidelines contained herein are intended to implement the City's Vision for quality projects that enhance the character of the community, as outlined in the City's General Plan. Details of the City's Vision are described in this chapter, along with the City's four Design Goals. These Design Guidelines are intended to provide design professionals, property owners, residents, staff, and decision-makers with a clear and common understanding of the City's expectations for the planning, design and review of development proposals in Rancho Cordova.

Generally, these guidelines will apply to all new development within the City, as well as qualifying modifications to existing development. Provisions herein are based on development type, rather than zoning designation and will serve to supplement the minimum development standards in the City's Zoning Code. Where the existing zoning provisions do not allow the development type or design flexibility preferred by the City, staff will propose corresponding amendments to the Zoning Code to ensure the desired result.





ORGANIZATION AND USE

This document is organized into different chapters based primarily on project type. Chapter 2 (Community Design) provides an overview of general site and architectural design provisions applicable to all types of development throughout the City. Subsequent chapters represent a more specific category of development types consistent with the new mixed-use designations and City Building Blocks concept (neighborhoods, villages, and districts) in the City's General Plan. Chapters 3 through 7 will serve to supplement the design provisions in Chapter 2 depending upon the type of development project. Specifically, guidelines are organized into the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the purpose, intent, applicability, organization, and use of the Design Guidelines. It also includes the vision of the City and the four Citywide Design Goals that the guidelines and standards support and implement.

CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY DESIGN

This chapter includes the vision for the city and community design goals for an integrated community framework, a mix of uses, project identity, and development that is pedestrian friendly and respects the context of the existing environment. This Chapter establishes general design guidelines for all development within the City, from large master planned communities to small in-fill sites of all types.



CHAPTER 3 COMMERCIAL AND COMMERCIAL MIXED USE CENTERS

This chapter addresses projects that are entirely commercial, as well as mixed-use projects that are predominantly commercial. The scale of projects can range from an individual single-use building to a multi-story, multi-building mixed use development. Design provisions for a wide range of *Village* and *Town Centers* are included in this Chapter. Centers are the gathering places that serve as the core of activity for the villages and districts they serve. This Chapter applies to lands designated as Commercial Mixed Use or any *Village, Town, or Transit-Oriented Center* destination on the City's General Plan land use map and to other sites that meet the criteria for each particular center type.

CHAPTER 4 OFFICE AND OFFICE MIXED-USE

In keeping with smart grown principles for compact development and a mix of uses, the City has established new land use designations that allow increased opportunities for integrating land uses both vertically and horizontally. Office and Office Mixed-Use designations allow a mix of land uses to occur on a project site or allow a project to be developed exclusively for office use. This chapter applies to lands designated for office mixed use on the City's General Plan Land Use Map and to other sites determined by the City Council to be appropriate for the land use designation.

CHAPTER 5 RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED, SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED, MULTI-FAMILY, AND RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE)

This chapter establishes design guidelines for a wide range of housing types and densities throughout the City. Provisions are intended to encourage unique neighborhood development patterns and home designs that create neighborhood identity and enhance the character of the community. Design provisions also address residential mixed use with supporting office and/or retail uses in conjunction with the predominant residential use. This chapter applies to all residential properties throughout the City with subcategories based on the proposed housing type, including Residential Mixed Use..

CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter applies to educational, cultural, protective, governmental, and other uses strongly vested with public or social importance. As such, guidelines herein are intended to ensure that community facilities are compatible with their surroundings and that they are inviting places that contribute to the character of the particular neighborhood and to the community as a whole. This chapter applies to use type, rather than to specific designation on the General Plan land use or Zoning Map as this type of facility is compatible with most land use designations in the City. Guidelines include provisions for those facilities with a local and regional focus.

CHAPTER 7 INDUSTRIAL

This chapter establishes objectives and guidelines for light and heavy industrial uses throughout the City. Provisions herein recognize the unique characteristics and limited client base for this use type. As such, guidelines focus on key provisions to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and general building design. This Chapter applies to property designated for industrial use on the City's General Plan land use map.

Each of the chapters listed above is organized into the following sections:

- Purpose;
- Organization;
- Applicability and Use Types;
- Site Design Standards and Guidelines; and
- Architectural Standards and Guidelines.

The Site and Architecture Sections are structured with a design objective and corresponding description, followed by design guidelines and in some cases design standards intended to ensure implementation of the specified design objective. Guidelines are listed in the form of recommended/encouraged provisions, specific solutions, design targets through representative sample, or a menu of design solutions from which to choose. This approach results in a greater

measure of predictability to the Design Review process, while maintaining flexibility and the option for creative design solutions. Design standards are intended to reference existing development standards of the Zoning Code or to identify new standards proposed where a single design solution is desired to achieve the design objective. Staff will ensure necessary Zoning Code amendments are processed in conjunction with the City's action on the Design Guidelines.

The Design Guidelines shall be used in conjunction with other documents adopted by the City that contain goals, development parameters, and more specific regulations relative to a particular type of development. In other words, development projects shall also comply with applicable provisions of the City's Interim General Plan and Zoning Code, applicable sections of the Municipal Code, Specific Plans, Special Planning Areas, and other adopted standards or plans (e.g., street standards, traffic calming guidelines, bikeway master plan). Except as otherwise vested, development projects shall comply with the current version of all adopted plans and policies at such time development is formally requested. Specifically, projects shall comply with the standards as outlined below:

- Roadway, bike trail, and bike lane standards (both City and Caltrans)
- ADA accessibility and design criteria
- Bicycle and vehicular parking requirements for number of spaces, lot design, and landscaping and screening
- The design and placement of transit stops as coordinated and specified by the transit provider (i.e. Regional Transit)
- Location and improvements for driveways

The appendix includes a glossary describing the terms and phrases used in these Design Guidelines. Terms and phrases described in the glossary are italicized throughout the guidelines. It also includes checklists for project review and evaluation and examples of streetscape furniture, a feature of development that the City encourages for all new projects.

The following table identifies which chapters of the Design Guidelines are applicable (“X”) to each design related planning and land use entitlement under the City’s jurisdiction. Again, Chapter 2 (Community Design) provides general guidelines applicable to all types of development projects within the City. Subsequent Chapters provide additional design guidance for individual project types (in addition to the design provisions of Chapter 2).

| PLANNING ENTITLEMENT | APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINE CHAPTER | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY DESIGN | CHAPTER 3 COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE CENTERS | CHAPTER 4 OFFICE AND OFFICE MIXED-USE | CHAPTER 5 RESIDENTIAL | CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITY | CHAPTER 7 INDUSTRIAL |
| Specific Plan/SPA | X | * | * | * | * | * |
| Subdivision Map | X | | | | | |
| Design Review: | | | | | | |
| SF Master Home Plan | X | | | X | | |
| Multi-family | X | | | X | | |
| Residential mixed use | X | | X | | | |
| Commercial/mixed use | X | | X | | | |
| Town Center mixed use | X | X | | | | |
| Office/mixed-use | X | | X | | | |
| Public/quasi-public | X | | | | X | |
| Industrial (light/heavy) | X | | | | | X |

* IF APPLICABLE TO PROPOSED PROJECT

BUILDING A CITY THROUGH COMMUNITY DESIGN

A VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

Rancho Cordova seeks change in its existing land use and development pattern and strives to become a first-class city in a first-class region. As the City grows and matures, it will become a city that is easy to get around. A wide variety of travel will be available, from light rail to personal vehicles to bicycling and walking. Traffic will be reduced, and drivers will find it easy to reach destinations in Rancho Cordova and outside the city.

People will feel safe working, living, and playing in the community. Young people will have many options for activities, providing safe, healthy alternatives to crime and gang activity.

The City will have an identifiable look and feel. You will know immediately that you are in Rancho Cordova—the quality of the built environment, the character of the neighborhoods, and the dynamics of the city’s public spaces will be a draw for persons throughout the region.

Rancho Cordova will be a city full of open spaces and opportunities for exercise and recreation. Trails and open spaces will be integrated into the City’s neighborhoods, linking people with shopping areas, public areas, and with other people. Civic gathering places will be focuses of activity, places where the community comes together to meet, to hear music and see plays, and to experience other cultures. Schools and parks will be integral parts of the community, providing additional opportunities for recreation, arts, or just peace and quiet.

Rancho Cordova will be a multi-cultural city that recognizes and celebrates the many cultures that make up its neighborhoods. The city’s public spaces and commercial areas will be important places for making connections with the people, foods, and ideas of other cultures and nationalities.



The City will be an exciting place for residents of all ages. The City’s population will be older than it is today; with more maturing households, and the City will respond by providing a wider range of housing opportunities.

Rancho Cordova will have an identifiable downtown—a place where people gather to work, shop, enjoy a meal, and take part in civic and cultural events. Everyone will know where the downtown is, and the downtown will be a place that helps bring together the city’s residents.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CITY

As described in the City’s General Plan, the Building Blocks of the City are Neighborhoods, Villages, and Districts/Town Centers. Neighborhoods are walkable residential areas with approx 1/3-mile radius served by a neighborhood center. A series of three to four neighborhoods comprise a Village with a mix of residential dwelling types, including the single-family areas found in the Neighborhoods and multifamily development near the center. Residents will shop for daily goods and services in pedestrian oriented Village Centers that are spaced 1½ to 2 miles apart. Entertainment and long-term retail and service needs will be satisfied by the Town Centers that serve an area of three to four Villages (a District). New development and modifications to existing development will be in keeping with this building block concept as expressed in the City’s General Plan.

CITYWIDE DESIGN GOALS

The City’s has established the following overall goals for development within its boundaries. The objectives, standards, and guidelines provided in the subsequent section are intended to encourage, promote, and require good, high-quality, pedestrian-oriented development while allowing flexibility in the design solutions. It is the intent of the City to manage its destiny, avoid the pitfalls of other cities, and have a profound, positive, lasting impact on the quality of life within its boundaries.



THE CITYWIDE DESIGN GOALS

- The creation of an **Integrated Community Framework** based on the Building Block concepts of a system of neighborhoods, villages, and districts and a successful circulation system
- **Compact Mixed-Use Development** as a basis for community design and character with more dense and intense mixed-use development in specified core areas
- Establish **Project Identity** by respecting the existing environment and community history and designing projects to be smart, vibrant developments that contribute to the enhanced character of Rancho Cordova
- **Pedestrian-Oriented Development** that is successful and attractive to residents and visitors of the City

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

The future of Rancho Cordova shall be based on an integrated network of Neighborhoods, Villages, and Districts. These are the building blocks of the City and are critical components that set the stage for how the City will function. They are pedestrian-oriented communities with integrated uses and functions, connected by a vast, efficient, community oriented circulation and transit system. Included in this system are bikeways, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, and a world-class transit system that moves people efficiently around the community and the region.

In Rancho Cordova, people will have the opportunity to walk from their homes to the local bus stop and ride transit to and from work. They will be able to walk to the neighborhood market for essential, daily goods and services, if they wish. Parks, schools, and other community assets are built into the neighborhood and are scaled and designed as active neighborhood centers that attract residents and allow neighbors to interact on a personal level.



COMPACT MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Rancho Cordova will develop and redevelop as a City formed by compact, mixed-use, urban development. The first step in this process is the densification and mixing of uses as outlined in the City's General Plan. Individual uses should relate to one another, whether integrated vertically, located next door, across the street, or across town. The City shall be designed using the City Building Blocks concept of Neighborhoods, Villages, and Districts. Different uses satisfy different niches in the community and should connect together through their placement, relationship, and integration. High-intensity uses typically function better along major corridors and near other high-intensity uses, whereas lower-intensity uses are fundamentally different and necessitate a difference in circulation types, neighbors, and overall scale.

Second, the character of development should lend itself to the urban form. The areas between buildings are inviting and attractive public spaces with a rich diversity of uses and activities. Landscaping and lighting complement the built form, accentuating the detailing of the architecture.

PROJECT IDENTITY

Individual projects of any scale, whether a small infill project or a large master planned community, contribute to the overall character of the City. Each project should have an identifiable identity that connects it to the City and/or district within which it is located. Rancho Cordova contains many unique and priceless natural features and habitats that contribute to the overall quality and character of the community that should be incorporated into projects as a way to achieve project identity (i.e. trails, open space corridors, preserve areas). Development should also respect and reflect the history of the community. Whether it is aviation and aerospace, farming, mining, the pony express, or recognizing important people in the community's history, development should connect the site user to the history of the community.





PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Rancho Cordova will be a walkable, pedestrian-oriented city. Development will be oriented and scaled towards the pedestrian user. Pedestrians will be safely separated from vehicular traffic. Plazas, parks, courtyards, and other open space amenities will invite and welcome the pedestrian throughout the City. Dynamic links and connections will be created between the built environment and the pedestrian – bonds that will transcend the physical realm and establish a strong, emotional sense of place with the user.





INTRODUCTION

